

It Is Written

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INCIDENTS OF THE SOCIAL GOSPEL

By James P. Needham

THE SOCIAL GOSPEL is a philosophy in religion that the church should concern itself with worldly problems rather than spiritual ones. It is more interested in ecology, biology, psychology and sociology than in theology. It is more concerned about preserving the whooping crane and alligator than about preaching Christ the emancipator. It spends more time fighting earthly pollution that MAY damage the body than with fighting spiritual plagues that WILL certainly damn the soul.

THE SOCIAL GOSPEL is more interested in feeding the body than in nurturing the soul. Its goal is education, not salvation; recreation, not sanctification; fraternity, instead of eternity. It concerns itself with the "new morality" rather than with immortality; birth control rather than self-control; ministering to the "inner city" rather than seeking the heavenly city; slum clearance rather than with spiritual perseverance.

THE SOCIAL GOSPEL philosophy is more interested in helping men make a living than in helping them make a life. It is more concerned with civil rights than with spiritual fights; civil laws rather than spiritual flaws; revolution rather than revelation; civil disobedience rather than spiritual obedience; communism rather than faith, repentance and baptism.

THE SOCIAL GOSPEL is a lame duck spiritually because it is without the power to fulfill the lasting needs of the human race. It preaches Christ as a great social reformer, rather than as a spiritual savior. It limits His work to earthly benefits for mankind; and Paul said, "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable" (I Cor. 15:19). Social Gospelism can only leave man spiritually naked!

Possessing The Mind Of Christ

By Everett Hardin

"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 2:5). The foundation truth of this exhortation is that Christians must become like Christ in Character; apply the same rule to themselves that they see and approve in Jesus. We should meditate upon all the circumstances in which He was placed, and the spirit He manifested on all occasions. What is that mind which was in Christ?

1. It was a mind of tenderness and love. Every act of His life was motivated by love. He gave his life a ransom for us, and thus manifested to the world a benevolence without parallel and beyond description. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (Jn. 15:13). When we are governed by selfishness, covetousness, spite, and vengeance we do not possess the mind of Christ. "Be ye therefore followers of Christ as dear children; And walk in love as Christ also hath loved us, and given Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor" (Eph. 5:1-2).

2. It was a mind of humility. Though Lord of angels, God blessed forever, He became a servant of servants. He came, "not to be ministered unto, but to minister and to give His life a ransom for many" (Matt. 20:28). He affectionately served His enemies and the poorest and vilest of mankind. He avoided the praise and honors the people desired to confer upon Him. More of this kind of humility in our lives would end much of the strife that separates brethren. "Before destruction the heart of man is haughty, and before honor is humility" (Prov. 18:12). A meek and a quite spirit in the sight of God is of great price (1 Peter 3:4).

3. It was a mind of fervent devotion. The whole life of Christ was distinguished for this. "I must work the works of Him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work" (Jn. 9:4). He was never known to utter one murmuring word, but was resigned to do all the Father's will. Devotion was the element in which He lived and in which He died, and the challenge to us is "to walk, even as He walked" (1 Jn. 2:6).

4. It was a mind of meekness. Under circumstances of great provocation, He displayed the most perfect self-possession and composure. They blasphemed Him, mocked Him and called Him foul names. Then they

went further to beat, buffet, and crown with thorns. He never reviled, but committed His cause to God that judgeth rightly (See 1 Pet. 2:22). No matter what He suffered He never displayed unhallowed passion, or a spirit of revenge. He wept over his vilest enemies, and prayed for His murderers. The rudeness, cruelty, and injustice of enemies, will not justify Christians in reviling and revenge. The reasons for sin can never be so great, but that we have stronger reasons to avoid it.

Let us examine and study the mind of Christ. Let it be constantly kept before our eyes, that we may always be looking to Jesus. May conformity to it be the anxious desire of our hearts.

Human Organizations

By Roy E. Cogdill

Human organizations through which to do the Lord's work reflect upon the wisdom of God. Since the Lord's church has been designed by the wisdom of God, it is sufficient to accomplish His purposes. When men build human organizations as an aid or substitute for God's organization they evidence their lack of faith in the sufficiency of that which God has provided and their dissatisfaction with God's ways (Isaiah 55:6-9). Men have the same right to write a chapter and add it to the Bible as to build an anteroom on the church of God.

Since God has given by divine wisdom an organization to the church, the congregation, and has made it sufficient to accomplish His purpose, it is the only medium of work and worship through which the Christian can accomplish His purpose, and we must be satisfied with His will, His way, and His word.

Is Heaven A Leap of Faith?

By Bill Robinson, Jr.

A TV documentary examined how different cultures deal with death. The researcher and narrator, after discussing the positive contributions that the concept of Heaven has on people, concluded by saying, "I hope there is a heaven but so far in my life my heart has not been able to make that leap of faith."

Let me address three things about that. God never intended our faith in Him to be a blind leap. He provided overwhelming evidence to prove that He exists and that the Bible is in fact His divine and infallible will.

Secondly, the obstacle to this researcher's faith is as he said, "in his heart." The truth is, he makes the leap of faith about heaven, in his disbelief that it exists. The will to believe, based on the insurmountable evidence, precludes the concept of Heaven from being a leap of faith in the heart. Jesus made it clear, "If anyone wills to do His will, he shall know concerning the doctrine..." (John 7:17).

Finally, there is a distinguishing characteristic between man and animal that man knows he is going to die, animals don't. Thus, animals are content in this world for it is the only world they'll ever know. Yet, in man we observe the discontent, the frustration and the despair in this world. Why? Let me answer this way, for every innate desire of man there is a corresponding reality (e.g. where there is thirst and hunger there is water and food to satisfy). Also, we see in man a desire to achieve, acquire and control and yet after reaching the summit of their fame, fortune and power many plumb the depths of despair and some even commit suicide. Why? The answer is, man has an eternal nature (Ecclesiastes 3:11) that cannot be satisfied by the temporal things of this world and only the reality of heaven, revealed in Christ, can fill that void (Colossians 2:9-10).

A Merry Heart

By Connie Adams

"A merry heart doeth good like a medicine; but a broken spirit drieth the bones" (Prov. 17:22). Some of the most pleasant people I have ever known have been seriously handicapped. Yet, rather than allow themselves to be broken in spirit by their adversities, they have learned to smile through the pain, maintain a sense of humor and can see the happier side of life. They possess merry hearts and these do good "like a medicine."

It is unpleasant to be in the company of those who are always lamenting their hardships, ailments or disappointments. While God does not intend for us to be giggling idiots, He has placed within us a sense of humor. This is for man's own good, when properly exercised. One of constant downcast countenance does nothing to adorn the doctrine of Christ.